

White Paper for

Organizing the Department Of Homeland Security

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NOTE: The opinions expressed in this article are not those of the Coast Guard and merely reflect the opinions of the authors.

Organizing the Department of Homeland Security for Maximum Effectiveness

The president's most important job is to protect and defend the American people. Immediately after last fall's attack, the President took decisive steps to protect America – from hardening cockpits and stockpiling vaccines to tightening our borders¹. The President also directed Homeland Security Advisor Tom Ridge to study the federal government as a whole to determine if the current structure allows us to meet the threats of today while anticipating the unknown threats of tomorrow. After careful study, the Administration proposed a Department of Homeland Security.

Within these discussions there has been recognition that our current structures lack coordination of purpose, information and intelligence. It also recognized that many dedicated people have been engaged in Homeland Security activities for many years. This top-level analysis and study identified many of the current shortfalls in our homeland security posture – but additional work remains if we truly expect to optimize the effectiveness of this new organization. How critical is it to systematically go about the design of this new organization? Given the importance of protecting the American people, we think the organization of the new department should be given the highest priority. The organization of this new department along existing agency lines, although a step forward, will not solve the basic problem that homeland security is currently a fragmented program marked by inefficiencies of communication and coordination among agencies often fighting for resources and turf. This White Paper proposes a methodology for organizing this new department around the accomplishments that the nation values using the discipline of human performance technology. This approach will ensure that the organization structure will support the effective accomplishment of the missions that the American public expects from the government.

The strategic approach we advocate would be to clearly define the accomplishments or results expected from the new department in order to achieve its mission. Once these accomplishments have been defined and their interrelationships have been mapped, these data could be used to drive organizational structure, staffing, process design, training, etc. For example, if one mission of the department is 'safe ports', then one accomplishment might be 'proper shipping container safely at the correct destination and free of contraband.' In order to produce this accomplishment an organization would combine all the steps in a logical fashion to achieve the desired end with maximum effectiveness as measured against the department mission. Simply pasting together existing agencies is not the most effective approach and would yield something like this non-example:

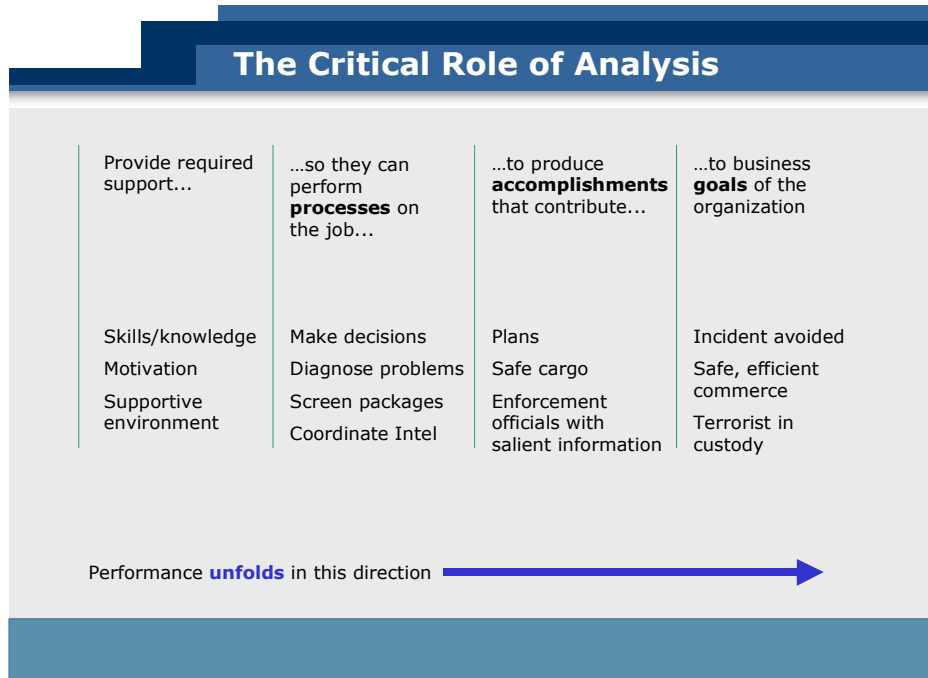
1. USCG personnel verify container's point of origin and schedule its delivery to port
2. Customs personnel verify that the contents have met import requirements
3. Another group would oversee container inspection
4. TSA personnel might be involved in its transit once inside the U.S.

An accomplishment or results-based organization would combine the required skills and people in a process focused on producing the accomplishment in a seamless fashion. Everyone involved would be measured against clear criteria and would understand how their activity (i.e., container inspection) contributes to the accomplishment (i.e., proper shipping container safely at the correct destination and free of contraband.) Our traditional approach would expect that the information would somehow transfer seamlessly from one agency to another.

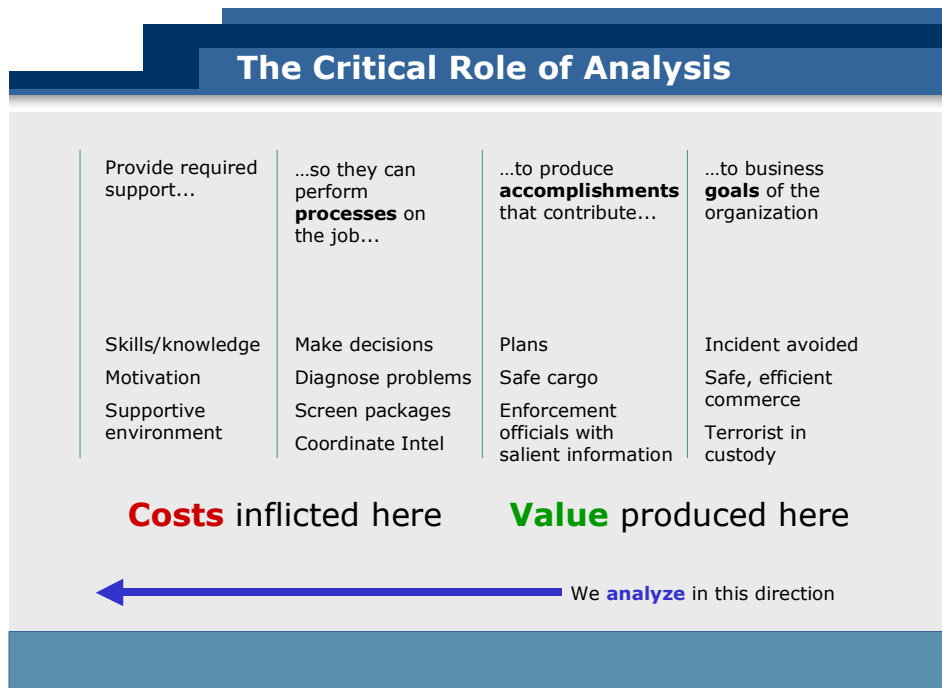
¹ President's report on The Department of Homeland Security, June 2002, p.1.

A brief explanation of our approach:

One can examine how human performance in any organization unfolds:



To design the new Department of Homeland Security, we are proposing that we begin by analyzing in the opposite direction:



The salient point is this: while everyone recognizes that we need a department with clear and efficient organizational structure if we are to optimize the security of our homeland, we need to proactively and strategically design the department using a methodology that identifies the responsibilities, duties, strategies and tools to be used by the human capital within the organization. Models from the field of Human Performance Technology can be used to achieve this outcome.

Moreover, accomplishments are produced at each level in an organization. For the new department to produce new or better or previously unobtainable accomplishments, we need to view their production collectively and interdependently. We are proposing the formation of a cross-agency task force guided by the tools of Human Performance Technology. The following pages present what that process might look like and provides a recent example of how such processes were employed in the U.S. Coast Guard.

A specific process to use

A brief summary of the possible application of HPT to the creation, structure and measures of the new department is first reviewed. That is followed by a case study from its application in the U.S. Coast Guard. This is followed by an elaboration for each of the steps in this process.

1. Task Force established (immediately) which represents key groups that will be brought together inside the new Department of Homeland Security.
2. Task Force trained on Organizational Alignment and New Performance Planning processes (these are documented methodologies used extensively by the U.S. Coast Guard and other commercial and industrial organizations).
3. Alignment meeting with Governor Ridge or appropriate stakeholders.
4. Map key organizational components:
 - a. Determine organizational goal
 - b. Define and map outputs of the component
 - c. Define and map inputs received and source of those inputs
 - d. Map processes used to convert inputs into outputs
 - e. Define and map receivers of those outputs (internal and external customers)
5. Define current jobs and roles in the organizational component and each job's relationship to critical outputs.
6. Capture data from current customer base.
7. Develop an accomplishment-based overview of the new department with key processes, outputs and standards.
8. Prioritize Human Performance opportunities.
9. Address each opportunity via the New Performance Planning methodology.
10. Establish plan and structure to support the on-going, cross-component optimization of human performance.
 - a. Use organizational alignment process again
 - b. Establish infrastructure to support optimal performance

Recent example from the U.S. Coast Guard

The U.S. Coast Guard undertook a study in 1997 called the Joint Rating Review using the methodologies proposed for structuring the new Department. One of the outcomes was the

Search and Rescue (SAR) Command and Control

“Our ability to respond to search and rescue (SAR) calls is a core competency of the highest order, and field commanders indicate that this competency needs attention throughout the entire Atlantic Area. The National Distress and Response System (NDRS) must be funded and implemented and must serve the nation with no coverage gaps. Group Operations Centers need adequate staffing to do the job...”

*Number one priority
from Atlantic Area Commander's
Regional Strategic Assessment*

recommendation to create an occupational specialty (rating) called “Operations Specialist.” While the U.S. Navy already had such an occupational specialty with the same name, this proposal had a different focus, with different outputs. The Coast Guard Operations Specialists would be the persons responsible for the tactical communications and mission planning of the Coast Guard. Historically the people who filled these jobs were those trained in telecommunications, others who were experienced piloting boats and yet other persons who were experienced in the navigation of cutters. These jobs, however, were now recognized as providing the core mission planning and coordination for Coast Guard operations. To achieve the high level of performance required in operations centers, these jobs needed to be designed around this core function of mission planning and coordination. To achieve this end, the Coast Guard employed the methodologies from the field of Human Performance Technology – and began by achieving organizational alignment, defined the jobs and roles within this organizational component and then identified the major accomplishments produced by people in these jobs. Only then could the organization identify the right types of training, equipment, selection criteria and other work environment support required.

Description of specialty and background

The Operations Specialist is the tactical command, control and communications specialty or rating in Coast Guard parlance. To meet identified mission requirements, this study identified the positions required for watchstanding in Coast Guard Operations Centers. It made tactical command and control the core competency of the Operations Specialist Rating. The technology employed in Coast Guard Combat Information Centers afloat, CASPER (C-130 Airborne Sensor with Palletized Electronic Reconnaissance) in the air and in Command and Control (C2) Systems in shore-based Operations Centers is the same. Investing in the competencies to stand

Integrated Policy Development, Mission Planning and Execution

The Coast Guard will shift from a program-focused approach to policy development, mission planning and execution to an integrated, cross-programmatic approach. Coast Guard missions increasingly cross program boundaries; we must develop planning processes that transcend traditional Operations (G-O) and Marine Safety (G-M) boundaries. Although the program-focused paradigm has begun to shift, primarily in the field, more cross-programmatic coordination and integration are required to improve our performance, increase efficiency, and better serve our customers. The respective roles of the operational commanders and headquarters program managers in these areas must be clarified. We must be agile enough to determine and evolve into the most effective and efficient organization structure as conditions dictate in the future.

*-Operations Strategies of the
Coast Guard Strategic Plan*

these watches effectively, to employ the tactics, procedures and doctrine of Coast Guard C2 into a group of people classified as Operations Specialists, will go a long way to meeting Regional Strategic Assessment priorities. The Coast Guard Strategic Plan calls for the capability to achieve Maritime Domain Awareness across platforms and command centers. The core competencies for these outcomes are the centerpiece of the Operations Specialist rating.

Progress and related recommendations

Operations Specialists are trained at the Coast Guard Training Center in Petaluma, CA. Their curriculum was designed and developed from the analysis data collected using the proposed methodologies – and is focused on the person’s ability to produce identified accomplishments. Examples of these accomplishments are shown in Table 1.1 below. These Operations Specialists will be the Coast Guard experts in the Command and Control Software Systems in use today and planned for tomorrow.

Major accomplishments

The table below lists the major accomplishments or outputs expected of the OS rating. These are the things that accomplished performers “leave behind” when their work is complete. The codes next to each correspond with the task lists and task data associated with each major accomplishment.

Table 1.1

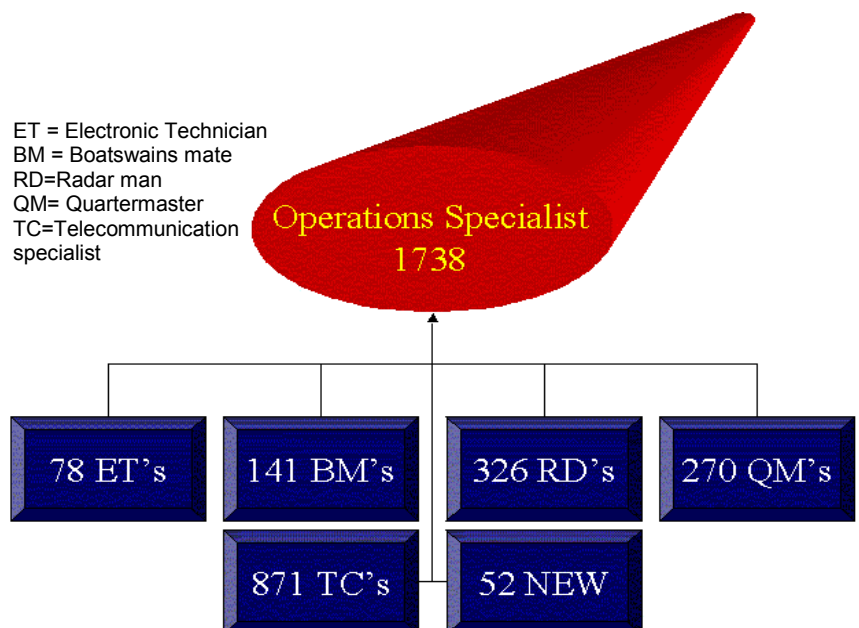
CODE	MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENT
OS-01	Operational C4I Systems
OS-02	Units situationally aware
OS-03	Executable Plans
OS-04	Local Intel users with relevant information
OS-05	National Intel users with relevant information
OS-06	Secure and reliable voice communications systems
OS-07	Secure and reliable data communications systems
OS-08	Physical Security Program Effectively Managed
OS-09	Personnel Security Program Effectively Managed
OS-10	Distress Communications Received
OS-11	SAR Case Completed
OS-12	L/E Case Completed
OS-13	Marine Safety Case Completed
OS-14	Appropriate Command Staff Situationally Aware
OS-15	Media With Relevant CG information
OS-16	Ordnance On Target

Position sources

The following graph depicts the source of positions proposed to make up the Operations Specialist rating. The illustrative point is that subsets of different specialties were being employed to do similar, related and interdependent work. As a result of this analysis, these positions were redesigned – in terms of their training, outputs and professional development – in order to produce accomplishments that were aligned with organizational goals.

In our example from a Coast Guard specialty you can clearly see how we were able create a new organization by starting with the valued accomplishment. By working

backwards from what needed to be produced [the results or outputs] we were able to break down antiquated organization stovepipes that didn’t support the accomplishment. In much the same way, but on a larger scale, this methodology will help break down the organizational structures in the existing agencies that will make up the new department. This breakdown does not imply eliminating these organization identities, rather suggests setting up an agency structure that doesn’t assume the traditional boundaries among them.

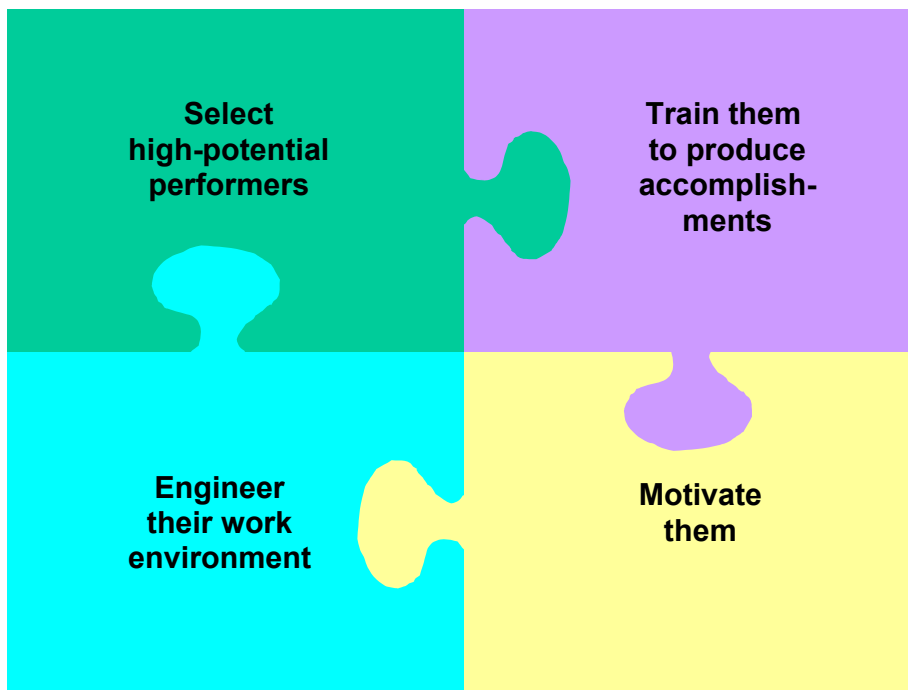


Elaboration of human performance approach to the Department of Homeland Security

1. Establish a Task Force (immediately) that represents key groups that will be brought together inside the new department. This task force would have representation from each of the affected agencies and could be grouped by the proposed divisions²:
 - a. Border and Transportation Security
 - b. Emergency Preparedness and Response
 - c. Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear Countermeasures
 - d. Information Analysis and Infrastructure Protection
2. Examine each division's organizational goals and the outputs from each of the components within the division. For example, the division for Border and Transportation Security would examine its goal to prevent illegal entry of potential terrorists and instruments of terror. Its. It would examine each component of the division to determine the required outputs needed to achieve rapid sharing of information that supports the divisional goal.
3. Train the Task Force on the proposed processes [Organizational Alignment and New Performance Planning / Front-end Analysis]. The front-end analysis process was developed after many after-action lessons learned studies were conducted. The purpose is to stave off the need to figure out what went wrong – by designing things correctly up front. Members of the task force will be trained in these methodologies, enabling them to accomplish the work of (in this case) “removing the barriers to efficient border security.” The fact that these methodologies are transferable, replicable, and scalable will allow the Department of Homeland Security to apply them cost-effectively, with minimal outside resources. It will also allow the Department to maintain and enhance the human systems over time without dependency of proprietary tools and techniques.
4. Hold alignment meeting with Governor Ridge or appropriate stakeholders. Up front and along the way, meetings with key stakeholders are essential to ensure proper direction, scope and organizational outcome. These meetings will also serve as progress reports for the task force.
5. Map key organizational components. Within each of the proposed divisions, will (or should) there be additional organizational components? For each of these components, the task force would:
 - a. Determine the organizational goal. For example, for a maritime component the organizational goal may be, “Prevent dangerous people and dangerous cargo from reaching our shores.” Under the Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear Countermeasures Division, the organizational goal may be to, “Protect the United States from catastrophic terrorism.”
 - b. Define and map outputs of each component. While the aforementioned organizational goal for CBRN is stated above, the outputs might include, “American people with clear, concise and consistent information about CBRN warnings and health care.” Furthermore, the task force would map out just how such an outcome would be achieved; what would the process look like.
 - c. Define and map inputs received and the source of those inputs. No matter how the organizational structure looks upon completion, inputs will still be required within and among departmental components – as well as required from external components of federal, state and local agencies. Identification of these inputs is critical to ensuring consistent, high level organizational performance.

² President's Report on The Department of Homeland Security, June 2002, p.2.

- d. Map processes used to convert inputs into outputs. Process maps will show not only information flow, but also who— be it person or entity — is responsible at each connecting point. Such information subsequently gives insight to the appropriate application of technology, performance support and even staffing – all based on the criticality and complexity of this flow.
 - e. Define and map receivers of those outputs (internal and external customers). Users of the outputs include the American public for some, but also include other law enforcement officials, other government agencies as well as other internal components of the department.
 - f. Define current jobs and roles in the organizational component and their relationship to critical outputs. All organizational goals of the department are ultimately produced by human performance. To achieve peak performance in the new department, work needs to be mapped to the jobs and roles responsible for producing component level accomplishments.
- 6. Capture data from current customer base. How have things worked up to this point? Which processes work well and where have there been problems or deficient accomplishments? Where are the performance gaps or opportunities for improvement?
 - 7. Develop accomplishment-based overview of the new department with key processes, outputs and standards.
 - 8. Prioritize Human Performance opportunities. This provides the leverage points – where is the best ROI for additional resources – whether in the form of training dollars, additional staffing, new technology, etc.
 - 9. Address each opportunity via the front end analysis (FEA) methodology. The FEA methodology leads to identification of job accomplishments and how to consistently produce those accomplishments. Once the major accomplishments for each job are identified, we can ensure consistent performance to standards by providing alignment of these inputs to performance:



10. Establish a plan and structure to support the on-going, cross-component optimization of human performance.
 - a. Use the organizational alignment process again as indicated from performance measures
 - b. Establish infrastructure to support optimal performance

Further recommendations and rationale

To build an accomplishment-based organization does not require a “Chief Performance Officer,” but it would seem to be a logical step. Upon examination of the above proposal, it becomes quite clear that having the perfect organization would not be something achieved overnight. The implication for further refinement and iterations of process would certainly be in our national interest. Establishing a C-level position makes sense, especially when organizations have established Chief Learning Officers, Chief Knowledge Officers and Chief Information Officers. A “CPO” would focus on the outputs – how the organization is doing on the accomplishment or results side of the equation versus being focused on inputs that may have little or no connection to organizational accomplishment. All said, our overarching concern is about organizational accomplishment or results – or organizational performance - that align directly with the Department’s mission.

The U.S. Coast Guard has experience in the application of Human Performance Technology and has some great success. While the Coast Guard is small by comparison, these practices and lessons learned have had a profound impact within the larger organizations of the U.S. Army and U.S. Navy (currently implementing Task Force Excel – to revolutionize the training and education of sailors). At the core of this effort is the focus on human performance technology.

Another aspect of this approach is its fit within the recognition that government can become quite the Byzantine bureaucracy – even when filled with dedicated, hard working civil servants. If, on the other hand, we organize by what we accomplish as work groups, teams and individuals, then we can hire, design work systems and train to fill the gaps.